



Communicable Disease Branch Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Weekly Key Points

September 1, 2020

The North Carolina Division of Public Health (NC DPH) Communicable Disease Branch will be releasing COVID-19 weekly key points that includes information discussed on the weekly Tuesday Local Health Department call. Recordings of the call will not be made available; please use the information below as a summary of the topics presented on the call. As guidance changes, please use the most recent information provided. For questions, contact the NC DPH Communicable Disease Branch 24/7 Epidemiologist on Call at **919-733-3419**.

Important updates

- **New:** NCDHHS_LHD Weekly Webinar_9.1.2020 FINAL.pdf (file attached)
- **New:** [COVID-19 Outbreak Toolkit for Local Confinement Facilities Instructions](#)
- **New:** COVID-19 Vax Planning Assumptions_8-27-2020_FINAL.pdf (file attached)
- **New:** Early COVID-19 Vax Action Items_8-27-2020_FINAL.pdf (file attached)
- **New:** Phase 1 vaccination planning scenarios_8.27.20.pdf (file attached)
- **New:** Interim Final Rule (IFC), CMS-3401-IFC, Additional Policy and Regulatory Revisions in Response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency related to Long-Term Care (LTC) Facility Testing Requirements and Revised COVID-19 Focused Survey Tool (file attached)
- **Updated:** Find My Testing Place (file attached)

Jail Health Toolkit

The NC DHHS has created a Jail Health Toolkit to provide practical guidance on prevention of COVID-19 in local jails and detention centers. This toolkit was created to assist local health departments to provide consistent prevention and testing guidance and assist with outbreak responses in these facilities.

The toolkit is now posted to the NCDHHS COVID-19 website under the [Correctional Facilities](#) section of the NC DHHS guidance for Law Enforcement on COVID-19, along with other guidance that may be of interest. All topics can be accessed from this website or by clicking on the [COVID-19 Outbreak Toolkit for Local Confinement Facilities Instructions](#) page, which describes the content of the Toolkit as well as the target audience for each document (local health departments, jail administrators, jail staff, and/or jail medical staff).

ReadyOP Form for Requesting Specimen Testing Supplies

It has come to our attention that some counties may have been trying to order specimen testing supplies with the previously expired ReadyOP link. If you need guidance on requesting testing supplies, please refer to this link: <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/information/health-care/requesting-specimen-collection-supplies> Please take note of the new ReadyOP link here: <https://nc.readyop.com/fs/4cER/0cbc>



Vaccine Updates

To help with vaccination planning, CDC has provided 3 planning documents. Those include updated planning assumptions, planning items for the early phase of vaccination and phase 1 vaccination availability planning scenarios. All are attached to the email accompanying the weekly key points. We are focusing on establishing priority groups based on current data and federal level recommendations as well as working on the necessary data gathering and reporting tools. We will share our state plan and the priority group information as soon as it is available. The National Academy has made their draft priority group document available at:

<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/25914/discussion-draft-of-the-preliminary-framework-for-equitable-allocation-of-covid-19-vaccine>.

State Lab of Public Health – Operations

The North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health (NCSLPH) **will be** operating on Monday, September 7th and testing specimens received. Alternate shipping methods (i.e., private couriers) may be used to transport specimens to NCSLPH for testing. Alternatively, sites should ensure that specimens and samples are stored using the proper conditions until all couriers resume normal business operations on September 8th. Please note, the State Courier **cannot** transport COVID-19 specimens. Please be advised that the State Courier, UPS, and FedEx **will be closed** for operation on Monday, September 7, 2020 in observance of Labor Day. All three couriers will resume normal operating hours on Tuesday, September 8, 2020.

Long Term Care Facilities (LTCF) Testing Updates

CMS requires routine testing of staff in nursing homes: CMS released [rules](#) that require routine testing of staff in nursing homes and will be in effect once the final rule is published, which we expect will be soon. The rules require Medicaid/Medicare participating skilled-nursing facilities/nursing homes to test staff according to county positive rates. Facilities in counties with <5% positivity rate in the past week will need to test staff monthly, facilities in counties with 5-10% positivity will need to test staff once a week, facilities in counties with greater than 10% positivity will need to test twice a week. Positivity rates are based on federal data. See link embedded above for more details.

POC antigen testing for staff screening: Point-of-care (POC) antigen tests are designed to test people who are suspected of having COVID-19. They are not designed for screening asymptomatic people with no known exposure. The two point-of-care antigen tests that currently have emergency use authorization from FDA are both indicated for testing of specimens collected from individuals who are suspected of having COVID19 and are within the first five days of the onset of symptoms. POC antigen tests are less sensitive than PCR tests, so “false negative” results are more likely. As a result, they are not recommended for testing when there are no known positive cases or unprotected exposures. CDC guidance does state that the use of devices is allowable for testing in high risk settings, such as nursing homes. If a nursing home has a vendor for its staff testing that is providing molecular testing results in a timely fashion, they should continue using this vendor. Per recently released CDC guidance, POC antigen tests can be used for screening when lab-based testing cannot provide timely results



Federal HHS will host a webinar with BD and Quidel on **September 3, 2020 from 12:00PM-1:00PM EST** to walk through each manufacturer's training modules that are being utilized by the nursing homes. Each manufacturer will have a 30-minute time slot to present and answer any questions. Use the following link to register for the training: https://bcg.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_jjlkj-9JTMeLY_Hzao7JCA

Find My Testing Place

Please continue to review the updated 'Find My Testing Place LHD' Excel file weekly to ensure information is up to date and accurate. Please send the updated files or any related questions to SVC_Covid-19TestingSites@dhhs.nc.gov